

Indian Chieftain.

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D. M. HARRIS, Editor.
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VINITA, IND. TER., FEB. 10, 1898.

The extension of the "Frisco" into Oklahoma will be a fine thing in many ways. For instance, we can trade the Chelsea press for the Guthrie man, who holds the belt for that territory.

A new paper has been started at the little town of Atoka, in the Choctaw country. Its name is the Choctaw Champion. Brother Smizer, of the Citizen, can now indulge in the pleasure of figuring against a competitor.

To those who find fault with THE CHIEFTAIN for its criticism of public officials we desire to say that it will be a sorry day for American citizenship when the public press cannot safely expose public corruption. The only defense this paper has to offer in rebuttal, is the absolute truth of its charges.

In Webster's old "blue-back" speller, used until a quarter of a century ago to the exclusion of all other spelling books in the schools, was this terse truth that will bear repetition: "Our farmers, mechanics and merchants compose the strength of our nation. Let them be wise and virtuous, and watchful of their liberties. Let them trust no man to legislate for them if he lives in the habitual violation of the laws of his country." About the only suggestion that could be offered to this nugget of wisdom at this day and date would be that no man who does not know how to live within the bounds of the law should be placed in a position where he is expected to enforce the law upon others.

The senate Indian committee is preparing to have a change made in the manner of disbursing annuity funds, particularly to the Osages, and will recommend that each beneficiary be sent a check direct from Washington. There are two sides to this question, as an unbiased investigation will show. While the Indians are frequently charged very high prices, the traders lose a great deal of money on collections, and furthermore the practice of the government of distributing these trade licenses as political patronage, places the trader in a continuous uncertainty and subjects him to no end of "assessments." Hence, in the very nature of things he is compelled to exact a liberal profit, and up to date has not failed to be fairly generous with himself.

The subject of redistributing of the Indian Territory for political purposes is exciting a good deal of attention just now, and is being discussed with a good deal of zeal by the people of the Northern district. It is a pity that this matter, which is so badly needed should not be attended to without friction, but like a great many other things, personal interests are allowed to creep in and are given the right-of-way, to the exclusion of the public weal. We take it that no public official should have the temerity to make a fight for or against any particular section, and that while he may not be expected to be hostile to the interests of his own town, he ought at least be broad enough to see the interests of the whole country in contra-distinction to those of a few schemers whose sole aim is to make money out of the arrangement.

There are many unpleasant indications that, after all, this Indian country may fall into the hands irrevocably of a lot of chattering, cold-blooded and utterly venal politicians. The changes that must necessarily come will necessarily place it within the grasp of the office-holding fraternity in both the political parties, and what one party don't get in the way of prey the other will, until the entire field shall be worked and reworked 'till not even the gleanings will remain. Of course the plain, common citizen does not want, and will not get recognition, but only the men who have tasted the sweets of office in other fields, and therefore do not know how to get a meal saved by some public service rendered by occupying time for the government. The safe old rule of the "survival of the fittest" cannot apply here for some years to come, as everything will be appointive under the present regime. It is noted that the minor appointments now run very largely to men who never did a great deal for themselves in all the long, tedious years of their lives, and now are gratified and pleased with the most meagre crumb from anybody's table. What the end of all this will be cannot even be guessed at.

EX-CHIEF BUSHYHEAD DEAD.

The Cherokee nation, during the century or more of its organized existence, has produced many men endowed with excellence of character and of native ability, and who would rank with the best product of any country. The death of Ex-Chief Dennis W. Bushyhead last Friday noon at the capital of this nation, calls public attention to the fact that another one of the greatest Cherokees has passed on to his eternal home. Mr. Bushyhead was a man of rich and varied experience, both in his own country and elsewhere, having spent something like twenty years in the west, on the Pacific slope. He was a half-blood Cherokee, and had every characteristic of a splendid specimen of the American Indian, who had availed himself of all the privileges and embellishments of civilized life. For the last quarter of a century the most conspicuous figure about the capitol, at Tahlequah, and by far the most influential Cherokee abroad, at Washington and elsewhere, has without doubt been Mr. Bushyhead.

He was born in the state of Tennessee, and had lived until the 18th of March next would have been seventy-two years old. He came of good Cherokee stock. His father was the Rev. Jesse Bushyhead, a well-known Baptist divine, who, associated with Rev. Evan Jones, translated the Bible into the Cherokee language. Mr. Bushyhead came to this nation in 1835 with his father and a detachment of Cherokees from the old nation, numbering about one thousand souls, and settled at Beattie's Prairie, in Delaware district. He attended the mission school at Park Hill under charge of Dr. Samuel A. Worcester, and afterwards attended a college in New Jersey. He crossed the plains to the gold fields of California in 1849, being one of the first who undertook that extremely perilous journey, and remained in California eighteen years, returning to own country in the spring of 1868, nearly thirty years ago. He was treasurer of the Cherokee nation eight consecutive years, from 1871 to 1879, when he was elected principal chief. He was re-elected in 1883, and was chief, in all, eight years. Mr. Bushyhead has frequently been a member of the Cherokee delegations to Washington, and has been conspicuous as a commissioner on the part of the Cherokees in various land deals and treaties with the United States government, having last served as one of the commissioners on the part of the Cherokees to treat with the Dawes commission. His ailment was Bright's disease.

JUDGE SPRINGER holds that decisions of tribal courts hitherto rendered are not necessarily final, but can be reviewed by the United States courts of the Indian Territory. The opinion is far-reaching in its scope, and if taken advantage of, will be the cause of endless litigation with reference to many matters that have, so far as the tribal courts are concerned, been finally settled. Then any case heretofore decided in the Indian courts may be reopened, and if found to have not been decided according to the tribal laws, may be reversed. Just how far back this decision would reach we are unable to state.

THEO. W. GULICK, the truthful editor of the South McAlester Capital, made a daring attempt to take his own life one morning last week, after a protracted debauch. If it had been the editor of some of Gulick's contemporaries the Capital doubtless would have printed something like this:

"To be, or not to be? That is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune; Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, And, by opposing, end them?" Or perhaps,

"Against self-slaughter There is prohibition divine That craves my weak hand."

The Creek authorities have taken to the United States courts as "naturally as a duck to water." Last week the discharged superintendent of Coweta mission obtained a temporary injunction against the superintendent of public instruction, restraining that official from interfering with him. Judge Springer decided that school teachers were not officers of the Creek nation, but employees of the superintendent and could be removed at will.

Seneca Dispatch: P. G. Brown, of this city, departed Monday for an extended trip to Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma. He will buy lumber for his yards at this place, Fairland, Vinita and Chelsea.

Miami Herald: Parties were in town this week looking over the town with a view to putting in a telephone line from Baxter to this city, and from here to Fairland, Afton and Vinita, with their main office in this city. We need connection with Vinita, in order to have wire connection all over the south, and our people should put forth an effort to secure this line by all means.

OUR SOUVENIR EDITION.

COMPLIMENTARY OBSERVATIONS OF OUR COTEMPORARIES.

Creditable to the City as Well as "The Chieftain" is the Declaration, Which Compensates for Labor and Expense.

Chelsea Reporter: The Chieftain will come out with a pictorial edition this week. The editor uses half-tones on his press with very good results.

Fl. Gibson Post: The Vinita Chieftain last week issued a splendid illustrated edition, booming the town and reflecting much credit and ability upon the editor and manager.

Tahlequah Arrow: The Indian Chieftain, of Vinita, got out a very handsome illustrated edition of its town, doing its people great praise and showing much enterprise on the part of its publisher.

Muskogee Times: The Indian Chieftain comes to us double size and very nicely ornamented with cuts of the nice buildings which adorn the little city up in the north part of the Cherokee nation.

S. W. City Enterprise: The Vinita Chieftain contained a very elaborate write-up of Vinita last week, and the paper was profuse with illustrations showing many of the business houses and residences of the town. The work was well executed, and showed a commendable enterprise.

Indian Citizen: The Vinita Chieftain came out in a special issue last week, with half tone engravings of many of the foremost business and residence buildings of the town. The issue is a credit to the place as well as the enterprise of the hustling managers of the Chieftain.

Afton Advance: The Chieftain came to us in the form of a handsome illustrated edition, showing the substantial business blocks and handsome residences of Vinita. It was complete in every particular, and presented a beautiful appearance. The Chieftain is one of best newspapers that reaches our exchange table.

Claremore Progress: Last weeks Chieftain contained an excellent write up of that town, which was profusely illustrated with cuts of many of the substantial business houses and neat dwellings of that thriving town. The people of Vinita should feel a pride in the Chieftain, it being one of the ablest papers in the Territory.

South McAlester Capital: The last issue of the Vinita Chieftain contained an interesting write-up of that progressive city accompanied with splendid half-tone engravings of the principal business blocks, residences and churches. Messrs. Milford and Harris are to be congratulated upon the result of their pluck and enterprise.

South McAlester Herald: The Indian Chieftain, of Vinita, I. T., reached us last week handsomely printed on good paper and containing a general write-up of that thriving town. Such publications serve to acquaint the world at large with the enterprise of the people where they are published and should be encouraged, and scattered broadcast.

Eufaula Journal: The Vinita Chieftain got out a very creditable illustrated edition last week. It was eight pages all home print and filled with a quality of matter that will prove of vast benefit to the town. The Chieftain is a representative paper in every respect and the progressive town in which it is published is not slow in recognizing its usefulness.

Neosho Miner and Mechanic: The Vinita Chieftain this week issued a very handsome eight page illustrated edition containing a full history of the town from its organization, and a great deal of matter of general interest in regard to Vinita and vicinity. It is tastefully gotten up and neatly printed and reflects great credit on our friend, Brother Milford.

Tulsa New Era: The Vinita Chieftain came to us this week in the form of a handsome illustrated edition, showing substantial business blocks and pretty residences of Vinita up in great shape. The edition was well patronized, which shows that Vinita has a host of good live citizens. It will be a fine advertisement of that city, and we congratulate our neighbors upon their enterprise.

Chetopa Democrat: The Vinita Chieftain was finely illustrated last week with cuts of business blocks, residences, churches and colleges of that thriving city. There was a review of the early history of the city written in excellent style and many entertaining reminiscences were given. It was one of the best special editions we ever saw, being entirely foreign to the fake advertising schemes often perpetrated upon the helpless public.

Seneca Dispatch: Last week's issue of the Vinita Chieftain was a special historical illustrated number, containing many handsome half-tone illustrations and a review of the territory metropolis from its founding to date. The showing made by the Chieftain was particularly creditable to both the paper and the town, and it shows the existence of more pride and enterprise in that town than most places the size of Vinita can boast of.

Fairland Bee: The souvenir edition of the Indian Chieftain reached us last week, and has been read with a good deal of interest. It is an illustrated edition of the town of Vinita showing many handsome homes, public buildings and business houses. The paper was a splendid edition, the pages full of interesting reading matter, the illustrations good, and the make up such as might be expected of the Chieftain. Vinita is a good town and the Chieftain is a good paper.

THE FIVE TRIBES IN CONGRESS.

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DELAWARE AND OTHER CLAIMS TO GO TO COURT OF CLAIMS.

Rejected Claimants to Have a Hearing in the Court of Appeals—General Territory Legislation Notes.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 5, 1898.

Senator Jones has introduced a bill which contemplates a settlement by the court of claims of many complications and contentions among the various tribes and between them and the government. It provides:—That the Delaware in the Cherokee nation, may, within sixty days after the passage of the act, bring suit in the court of claims, to determine their rights to land and funds in the Cherokee nation, under agreement of 1867. The Cherokee nation may bring a like suit against the Delaware.

That white intermarried citizens in the Cherokee, Choctaw and Chickasaw nations, may within ninety days, bring suit in the court of claims, to determine their rights in the lands and funds of the tribes into which they have married. The several nations may bring like suits against such citizens.

That all suits brought under provisions of the act shall be advanced on the docket, and determined as early as practicable, and that the decision of the court of claims shall be final.

The Chickasaw freedmen and the Mississippi Choctaws are also permitted to bring similar suits.

The Indian delegates offer no special objection but suggest that the right of appeal ought be given to the supreme court of the United States.

It now appears that the rejected citizenship claimants in the several nations will be given an appeal to the court of appeals of the territory. W. J. Watts, representing the claimants, has been here for two weeks and has been working faithfully to get a re-opening of the question. Recently he was joined by M. M. Edmonston, of Vinita, who represents with him, the same interests.

As intimated in former letters, sentiment has materially changed in the claimants' favor. In what ever is done on this line, the senate will take the lead. Senator Platt Friday reported an amendment to a pending bill, as follows: "That all rejected citizenship claimants may, within sixty days after the passage of the act, appeal such cases to the court of appeals of the Indian Territory. Before such appeal shall be taken by any applicant for citizenship, he shall give bond sufficient to cover all rents on, or damages to, property of the tribe in which he may hold such possessions, together with all costs of the appeal, and the decision of said court of appeals shall be final."

The claimants asked to go to the supreme court of the United States. It is very likely that this amendment will become a law. One thing influencing congress in the matter is that uniformity may be had in the final settlement of these questions. Heretofore the decisions of the several district judges to whom appeals were taken from the Dawes commission were not in harmony. The decision of the court of appeals composed of the three judges will necessarily be uniform. To meet this probable move the Cherokee delegation are preparing a petition to congress asking that the intruders be removed from that country, by an enforcement of the "intruder clause" of the Strip agreement. This is being prepared by Watt A. Duncan, chairman of the Cherokee delegation.

An amendment will be presented to the Indian appropriation bill at the proper time, providing that all towns now incorporated or that may be hereafter incorporated, be authorized to secure, by condemnation or otherwise, all lands necessary for water mains, sewers, pumping stations and for other necessary public improvements, regardless of tribal lines or boundaries, in the manner as provided for the condemnation of private property for public use, in sections 907 to 912, inclusive, Mansfield's digest of the laws of Arkansas.

Many towns in the Indian Territory are clamoring for courts. Their wishes are being presented by petitions, letter and otherwise. As a rule their efforts are directed in the wrong direction. It is generally supposed that the Indian affairs committee has exclusive jurisdiction of all matters pertaining to the territory. This is not true. The judiciary committee passes on all court matters and to this committee all matters relating to courts should be directed.

The towns most anxious for courts are Sallisaw, Nowata, Poteau, Tulsa and Tishomingo. J. E. Campbell has been here for several days and has personally urged the claims of Nowata. Governor Harris and Attorney General Boyd of the Chickasaws are here to urge the establishment of a United States court at their capital, Tishomingo.

In compliance with a clause in the last appropriation bill the Dawes commission has made a report as to whether the Mississippi Choctaws are not entitled to all the rights of Choctaw citizenship except in the annuities. Their conclusions are that it is a matter to be judicially determined and they recommend its reference to the court of claims.

A brief chapter of Cherokee history has come to my knowledge. I get it from Mr. Watt A. Duncan, chairman of the Cherokee delegation in Washington. We were discussing the general

proposition of the duty of the government to observe its pledges to the Indians. "The full-bloods," said Mr. Duncan, "do not and cannot conceive of the idea of the government breaking a solemn pledge to them. They regard the government as an individual, a personality, and actuated by the sentiments and emotions of an individual. Here is an incident illustrating the faith of our people in the pledges of the government: The first treaty with the Cherokees was made in 1785, two years after peace was concluded. The Cherokees had been the allies of Great Britain, and the new government sent Attorney General Meigs to negotiate a treaty with our people. They were assembled by the old Chief Pathkiller. When the treaty was concluded, the chief presented General Meigs, as a pledge of faith on the part of the Cherokees, a magnificent belt of wampum, some four feet long, and six inches wide. The belt was interlaced with thongs of buckskin, strips of silk and tubes of coral. This belt is now in the possession of the descendants of General Meigs, who resides in Washington. I had the good fortune to see and handle this ancient relic of my people only a few days ago."

One day last week as J. W. Franklin working in some timber in the Osage country, something struck him on the boot leg with sufficient force to cause considerable pain. Upon looking for the cause of the occurrence, he found a large size bullet on the ground near his feet. He does not know where the ball came from, as he heard no report of a gun. A few days later, as E. Gordon, near Capers, was driving through the Whiteturf bottom, east of here one of his mules suddenly stopped and showed signs of distress. In a few moments Mr. Gordon discovered blood on the neckyoke of the wagon, and upon investigating, found the mule had been shot squarely between the eyes, the ball just penetrating the skin and coming out near the corner of one eye. Like Mr. Franklin, Gordon heard no gunshot, and it appears that both of these shots must have been fired at long range, or else the party handling the gun was using some kind of noiseless powder.—Bartlesville Magnet.

Judge Springer last Saturday issued an order on Treasurer Lipe of the Cherokee nation to show cause why he should not be compelled to pay into the register of the United States court at this place, the \$36,000 held by him as custodian of the Old Settler or Western Cherokees. Mr. Lipe was recently enjoined by the United States court from paying any of this money to any persons, until the rights of Col. R. L. Owens, Col. Ben. T. Duval, W. B. Rogers and other had been determined, but it was alleged that Lipe had paid out a portion of the money since the injunction was served on him, and hence the order of Judge Springer requiring him to show cause why he should not pay the money into court.—Muskogee Times.

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